AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling method wherein a liquid is delivered from a storage tank into a filler tank of a filler, and said liquid is filled into containers by said filler, said method being characterized in that the liquid in said filler tank is returned through a return piping attached to said filler tank and refluxed to said storage tank through a reflux path so that the liquid circulates throughout the entire filling line extending from said storage tank to said filler constantly during both liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

2. (Original) A liquid filling method according to claim 1, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling method wherein a liquid delivered from a storage tank is heat-sterilized before being delivered into a filler tank of a filler, and said liquid is filled into containers by said filler, said method being characterized in that the liquid [[in]] from said filler tank is constantly flowing and is variably proportioned between returning [[returned]] through a return piping attached to said filler tank and refluxing [[refluxed]] to said storage tank through a reflux path so that the liquid circulates throughout the entire filling line extending from

said storage tank to said filler, wherein the liquid flowing through said reflux path to said storage tank is cooled.

5. (Original) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

6. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein said refluxing is carried out during [[at least one of]] both liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

7. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 1, wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said detecting device.

8. (Original) A liquid filling method according to claim 7, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

9. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling apparatus that fills a liquid into containers, said apparatus including a liquid filling line having a storage tank that stores the liquid and a filler that fills said liquid into the containers, wherein the liquid in a filler tank is returned

through a return piping attached to the filler tank to the entire liquid filling line so that said liquid constantly circulates throughout said liquid filling line, both during liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

10. (Original) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling apparatus that fills a liquid into containers, said apparatus including a liquid filling line having a storage tank that stores the liquid, a heat sterilizer that heat-sterilizes said liquid, and a filler that fills said liquid into the containers, wherein at least a portion of the liquid [[in]] from a filler tank is constantly flowing [[returned]] through return piping attached to said filler tank to the entire liquid filling line so that said liquid circulates throughout the entire liquid filling line, said apparatus further including a cooling device that cools the liquid flowing through said reflux path.

13. (Original) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

14. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said refluxing is carried out during [[at least one of]] both liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

15. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9, further including:

a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank; and

a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device.

16. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 15, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said detecting device.

20. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 17, wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said detecting device.

21. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 18, wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said detecting device.

22. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 19, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

23. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 20, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

24. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 21, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the

amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 25, further including:

a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank; and

a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device.

28. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, further including:

a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank; and

a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device.

29. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 26, further including:

a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank; and

a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device.

30. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 27, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

31. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 28, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

32. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 29, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

33. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

34. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

35. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

36. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.